

**279.10 School year — beginning date — exceptions — pilot programs.**

1. The school year shall begin on the first day of July and each regularly established elementary and secondary school shall begin no sooner than a day during the calendar week in which the first day of September falls but no later than the first Monday in December. However, if the first day of September falls on a Sunday, school may begin on a day during the calendar week which immediately precedes the first day of September. School shall continue for at least one hundred eighty days, except as provided in subsection 3, and may be maintained during the entire calendar year. However, if the board of directors of a district extends the school calendar because inclement weather caused the district to temporarily close school during the regular school calendar, the district may excuse a graduating senior who has met district or school requirements for graduation from attendance during the extended school calendar. A school corporation may begin employment of personnel for in-service training and development purposes before the date to begin elementary and secondary school.

2. The board of directors shall hold a public hearing on any proposal prior to submitting it to the department of education for approval.

3. The board of directors of a school district may request approval from the department of education for a pilot program for an innovative school year. The number of days per year that school is in session may be more or less than those specified in subsection 1, but the innovative school year shall provide for an equivalent number of total hours that school is in session.

a. The board shall file a request for approval with the department not later than November 1 of the preceding school year. The request shall include a listing of the savings and goals to be attained under the innovative school year subject to rules adopted by the department under chapter 17A. The department shall notify the districts of the approval or denial of pilot programs not later than the next following January 15.

b. A request to continue an innovative school year pilot project after its initial year also shall include an evaluation of the savings and impacts on the educational program in the district.

c. Participation in a pilot project shall not modify provisions of a master contract negotiated between a school district and a certified bargaining unit pursuant to chapter 20 unless mutually agreed upon.

4. The director of the department of education may grant a request made by a board of directors of a school district stating its desire to commence classes for regularly established elementary and secondary schools prior to the earliest starting date specified in subsection 1. A request shall be based upon the determination that a starting date on or after the earliest starting date specified in subsection 1 would have a significant negative educational impact.

[R60, §2023, 2037; C73, §1724, 1727; C97, §2773; S13, §2773; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4226; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §279.10]

83 Acts, ch 17, §1, 3, 4; 85 Acts, ch 6, §1, 2; 86 Acts, ch 1245, §1467; 88 Acts, ch 1087, §1; 88 Acts, ch 1259, §1; 90 Acts, ch 1272, §68; 94 Acts, ch 1020, §1; 2010 Acts, ch 1061, §180

Referred to in §256.20, 256F4, 257.17, 299.1, 299.4